



Chapter 7

Short-term Uses of Man's Environment Versus Long-term Productivity

7.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USE OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

7.1 THE RESERVATION

In examining the trade-off between short- and long-term gains or losses involved with the proposed action it must be remembered that in 1940 Fort Irwin was withdrawn from the public domain to be used as a military reservation. In 1961 it was declared a permanent installation. The proposed action, in its effects on the natural and cultural environment, should be considered in light of this history of decisions. The use of Fort Irwin for thirty-eight years as a training facility has narrowed the existing reservation's potential for other land uses.

The establishment of a National Training Center at Fort Irwin does not involve the use of predominantly unaltered desert lands which could otherwise be considered for their wilderness or prime wildlife habitat potential. The character of the landscape is not of the quality to be thought conducive to most forms of outdoor recreation, although it would be suitable for uses such as off-highway vehicle activity. Due to Fort Irwin's remote location and limited water resources, there is little or no foreseeable agricultural or developmental potential for the immediate area.

Long-term expanded weapons and tracked vehicle use of the reservation will lessen the diversity of plant and animal species within the area. Among these are several rare or endangered flora and fauna. (See Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4.)

7.2 THE CANTONMENT AREA

Water quality from existing groundwater resources mined to supply the reservation may decrease over time.

7.3 THE BARSTOW AREA

The introduction of 6,000+ people into a desert environment will add to the already existing strain on Barstow's limited supplies of water. Historically, once the end of local water supplies is in sight, communities have satisfied their needs by importing water from areas with more plentiful, but finite, resources. The effect of these actions results in long-term changes to those water systems being tapped, as well as the people who live within their influence. Such actions, in a cumulative sense, will effect far-reaching change in the ecological and economic makeup of the region and state.